RAJYA SABHA

Monday, the 27th March, 1989/6th Chaitra, 1988 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock, **Mr. Chairman** in the Chair.

FELICITATIONS FOR HOLI FESTIVAL

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI (Maharashtra): Welcome, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why specially today? Your 'welcome" is dangerous!

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: My welcome is dangerous?

... (*Interruptions*) ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: He said, "Welcome." Why today—as if I was unwelcome up to this day?

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: After eight days we are meeting today. That's all.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So, happy Holi!

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Happy Holi!

MR. CHAIRMAN: This statement should also be taken in the Holi spirit.

MEMBER SWORN

Shri Ratna Bahadur Rai—West Bengal.

OBITUARY REFERENCE

MR. CHAIRMAN: I refer, with profound sorrow, to the passing away of Shri Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna who, as honourable Members are aware, died at the Cleveland Centre in Ohio, USA, after a massive heart attack.

Shri Bahuguna was born in the Garhwal district of Uttar Pradesh in April 1919 and had his education at Dehradun and Allahabad. A student leader from his college days, Shri Bahuguna actively participated in the "Quit India" Movement in 1942 and was imprisoned for about a year. Shri Bahuguna was an eminent freedom fighter, a dedicated nationalist and an able administrator. In a long parliamentary career spanning four decades, he rose to high positions due to his selfless and dedicated service in the cause of the poor, the downtrodden and the minorities. He was a Member of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly and of the Lok Sabha between 1952 and 1984. He held many ministerial portfolios in Uttar Pradesh and was Chief Minister there. At the Union level, he was Minister of Communications, then, of Petroleum and Chemicals and Fertilizers, and also of Finance for a few months. His death has created a void which will be difficult to fill. In him the country has lost a great patriot and an able administrator.

We deeply mourn the passing away of Shri Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna. I request Members to rise in their places and observe silence as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed.

[*Honourable Members then stood in silence for one minute*].

MR. CHAIRMAN: Secretary-General will convey to the members of the bereaved family our sense of profound sorrow and deep sympathy.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Equipment for underground coal mining in Singareni Collieries Company Limited

*341. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Singareni Collieries Company Limited use mechanised long wall face equipment for underground coal mining; if so, what is the average output of coal per day;

(b) what is the average cost of each set of equipment including mandatory spares;

(c) whether a particular foreign make shearer has given a lot of trouble in the past two/three years; if so, what is loss of production in terms of rupee value as a result thereof; and

(d) whether the Company is considering to place an order for the shearer of same make again?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir. Singareni Collieries Company Limited are using two longwall face equipment in GDK 9 Incline and VK 7 Incline mines. Average output of coal per day during 1988-89 (upto 28-2-1989) from these two faces was 1071 tonnes and 1774 tonnes respectively.

(b) The cost of the longwall face equipment including mandatory spares is as below:

GDK 9 Incline—Rs. 9.48 crores

VK 7 Incline—Rs. 9.81 crores

(c) and (d) The longwall face equipment working in GDK 9 Incline was idle for 5 days in 1988 and for 33 days in 1989 due to problems with the shearer. This longwall equipment supplied by an Indian public sector company has a shearer manufactured by a U.K. firm. The loss of production is valued at Rs. 1.12 crores.

The longwall face equipment ordered on another public sector enterprise in December 1988 will incorporate a shearer of the same make but with higher horsepower and modified specifications.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Sir, the statement laid on the Table of the House does not specifically clarify point (c) of my question which asks:

"whether a particular foreign make shearer has given a lot of trouble in the past two/three years; if so, what is the loss of production in terms of rupee value as a result thereof;"

They have said, "Yes. The incline was kept idle for five days in 1988 and for 33 days in 1989 due to problems with the shearer." My specific question on this point, Sir, is: What make was the shearer? Is it not a fact that we have invested Rs. 30 crores in this particular machine and that the arm, the longwall of this machine broke down and that the AM 5, as it is known, the main motor burned out? In terms of mechanics, machinery, it is virtually impossible for an AM-5 main motor to burn out. Did the Government take cognizance of this? Why are we purchasing it? Are we still considering this shearer for Singareni coal-mines. I am particular on (c) because it pertains to Andhra coalmines.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, these shearers were bought in 1983. The order was placed on two public sector companies—one Jessop and Co. of Calcutta, and the other, the MAMC, Durgapur. These were the two companies manufacturing at that time the longwall face. They had a collaboration with a U.K company called "Anderson Stracklite' which supplied these shearers.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Through Jessop?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Yes, through Jessop. They supplied it to Jessop. We had a contract only with the Jessop. The MAMC also had a contract again with the Anderson Stracklite as far as these shearers were concerned.

They have been working since 1983 on GDK 9. Earlier GDK 7 incline has been working for two years. No problem was there. Then it was transferred to GDK 9. In GDK 9 in 1985

the shearer broke down. We have taken up the matter with them. They agreed to replace it. It has been since then working well. Again, as far as GDK 9 is concerned, for 44 days it was closed down because of the breaking of the shearer. We have taken up the thing with the company. I have given the loss figure also. We have now given a letter of intent also to two companies, one DML and the other, Andhra Corporation for making longwalls because in years to come we will need more and more longwalls. We are interested in getting the best, whosoever manages it.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: I appreciate the Minister's concern. All of us collectively want the best for every part of the country. But the statement specifically says that the public sector enterprise in December 1988 will incorporate the shearer of the same make, but with higher horsepower and modified specifications. Are we short of it for want of manufacturers of this machinery. Why have we been partisan to England only? Is it not a fact that Germany, Australia, Russia, Poland and America also make these machines? Have we called for a letter of intent from any one of them? Are they in any way less competant than this particular company to produce the same machine? This company has already established that it has given us some trouble at some great cost.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: As I said, we have not called for any international companies to come and bid for it. We are giving preference to our public sector companies. When the times comes, we will again give the letter of intent to indigenous companies. Now, it is for them to have a collaboration with some outside company, whether it is a German or British or some other foreign concern. They must get the best and we will try, naturally, to insist on the best. With whom they should collaborate, we do not want to dictate to them, because we want to keep the options open to us to get the best.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are we not manufacturing them ourselves?

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: To get the best when they have gone through the Jessop, which is allegedly a public sector company—80 per cent of it is on import and there is only 20 per cent indigenous—how do you justify that you are encouraging indigenous enterprise in the country and hence you have gone through these people? What does the public enterprise mean if you are going to import 80 per cent? Please clarify that. And the Minister has written a book on this!

SHRI VASANT SATHE: If the suggestion of the hon. Member is that because a public sector company is having larger share of imported components when they manufacture a particular machine, it should not be given what is the hint? Should we give it to private people and also to multinationals or outside?—I will say I don't agree with that suggestion. We will have to insist on our public sector as well as other indigenous manufacturers improving their equipment and giving us the best. This is how I look at it.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: You say this when this question is raised in this House. Why had it not been done earlier?

SHRI SUNIL BASU RAY: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the cost of production of long-wall machinery is different from the conventional ones. What is the difference between the two? I would also like to know whether the long-wall machinery are proving to be economical in our production or not. I agree with the hon. Minister that we want to depend on indigenous production, but as yet we are depending on UK mainly for the supply of long-wall machinery. And wherever these UK long-wall machineries are in operation,

these are not functioning. So, I also want to know whether the Government has reviewed the entire matter of mechanisation and whether we are building up a sufficiently strong indigenous base for mechanising our mines. Or, are we utilising this mechanisation programme to declare certain manpower as surplus and to throw them out of the industry? This is one thing that I want to know from the hon. Minister.

Then the question is whether after five idle days in 1988, sufficient preventive action for maintaining that machine was taken so that the idle hours are not repeated in future? But, as we see here, they have five idle days in 1988, in 1989 in these three months —the three months are not yet over— thirtythree days have been idle. So, I would like to know whether these five days and thirtythree days are consecutive or not and whether after these five idle days, we took sufficient preventive measures so that such idle hours would not be repeated. These are my questions.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, I think, his question has so many questions in it. The first question was: Are we in favour of substituting human labour with machines? The answer is wherever mechanisation is essential for productive purposes we will do it. As these underground mines go deeper we find all over the world longwall is the method to be used for economic production. So we are introducing longwall method. The objective is not to replace the labour but to utilise this labour in some other mines. We are having too much of work force. As I said on many occasions. Sir, our own out put per man shift is the lowest and you cannot run with the hare and hunt with the hound. You cannot plead, at the same time, to employ more people and then say we must have better productivity. This sort of thing, Sir,..

MR. CHAIRMAN: You will not put them out of employment?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: We will not put them out of employment and that is our assurance. But we should also not be forced not to mechanise; otherwise you will not increase your productivity. This longwall faces are essential to improve the productivity. I confess that our experience uptill now with the longwall experiment is that they have not yet been worked to their full capacity in India because of the coal strata, coal conditions and all these excuses and sometimes I am myself not very happy. There are so many factors involved in it. We want to help the public sector. We want to encourage the public sector. So, we are trying to find out how to have better productive input so that we can have better production. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI SUNIL BASU RAY: Has it proved economical or not?. . (*Interruptions*)....

MR. CHAIRMAN: His question is whether it is economical?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Yes, it will be economical. Today, it is not.

SHRI SUNIL BASU RAY: What about preventive action and maintenance work? ...(*Interruptions*) ...The Minister has not replied to these things... (*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. In his original supplementary he had asked about maintenance. Have you looked after maintenance?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Yes, Sir. That we are doing. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Sir, I would like to know from the Minister, through you, whether, sometime ago the Government had invited British experts to suggest ways of modernising our coalmines, and how far the Government has implemented the recommendations? Today, Sir, coal is being sold at Re. 1 per kg. which is terribly expensive for anybody in the country. May I know from the Minister whe-

ther the Government has any plans to sell coal at cheaper prices? It is true that slow progress of modernisation in our coalmines is the cause not only for low production, but also for many avoidable casualties. What proportion of the mining equipment is manufactured indigenously?

WELCOME TO PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION FROM IRELAND

MR. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, I have an announcement to make. We have with us this morning, seated in the special box, Members of a Parliamentary delegation from Ireland which is currently on a visit to our country under the distinguished leadership of his excellency Mr. Sean Treacy, Speaker of the Lower House of Irish Parliament.

On behalf of the Members of the House and on my own behalf, I take pleasure in extending a very hearty welcome to the Leader and other Members of the delegation and wish our distinguished guests a very enjoyable and friutful stay in our country. We hope that during their stay here they would be able to see and learn more about our Parliamentary system, our country and our people and their visit to this country will further strengthen the friendly bonds that exist between us. Through them we convey our greetings and best wishes to the members of the Irish Parliament and the friedly people of Ireland.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS— Contd.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, as far as making coal cheaper is concerned, after nationalisation, coal has been having administered prices and at no stage was the coal industry allowed to have a price which will cover the cost. The price was always kept lower than the cost of production in the public interest. The result has been the coal setcor has been continuously incurring losses and the costs have been going up. Therefore, to the question whether we will be able to sell coal cheaper, the answer is "No". The next question is, has mechanisation helped? Yes, it has because with mechanisation alone we can improve the productivity and cost efficiency. That we have constantly been trying to do, as I said, by introducing equipment like longwall, etc. and we hope that as far as underground mining is concerned, we will be able to improve the productivity.

श्री चतुरानन मिश्र : सभापति महोदय, जो हमारे कोयले की कीमतें ऊंची हैं उसके बहुत से कारण है और उनमें से एक कारण यह भी है कि जो हमारी कोल माइंस की मशीनरीज हैं जो बहुत कास्टली हैं उनका कैपेसिटी यूटिलाइजेशन बहुत कम है, जनरली 50 से 60 परसेंट ही है । तो मैं मंत्री महोदय से पहला प्रश्न यही जानना चाहूंगा कि जो ब्रेक डाउन हो जाते हैं इन मशीनरीज के, तो जैसे यूनाइटेड किंगडम में है कि जो कम्पनी मशीन सप्लाई करती है वही उसके मेन्टिनेंस का भी भार ले लेती है ताकि भारी ब्रेक डाउन रिडयूस हों तो जिनसे हम मशीनरीज खरीद ते हैं उनके साथ एक क्लाज यह भी रखेंगे या कांट्रेक्ट रखेंगे कि वे टाइमली उसका मेन्टिनेंस भी कर दें नहीं तो उन के बिल से काट लिया जायेगा ; इन मशीनरीज का यूटिलाइजेशन ज्यादा हो सके इसके लिये क्या हमारे यहां भी यूनाइटेड किंगडम की तरह यह प्रावधान रखेंगे कि जो सप्लायर कम्पनी है वही इमीडियेट उसका मेन्टिनेंस ठीक रखेगी, रिपेयर कर देगी । क्या आप ऐसा प्रावधान करेंगे यह मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहूंगा ।

श्री वसन्त साठे : यह सुझाव बहुत अच्छा है । हम आज तक तो यह प्रयास करते रहे हैं कि जो हमारी ये कम्पिनयां हैं, स्पेयर्स वगैरह के मामले में वे जिम्मेदार रहें । लेकिन मेन्टिनेंस के लिये उनकी जिम्मेदारी रखी जाय यह जो आप का सुझाव है इस पर हम जरूर विचार करेंगे ।